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THE ART AMATEUR

DEVOTED TO THE CULTIVATION OF
ART IN THE HOUSEHOLD

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

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SPURIOUS "OLD MASTERS."

DOUTBLESS a vast quantity of counterfeit "Old Masters" is manufactured in England for the American market. Uncle Sam, in every branch of art, first turns to his nearest relative to be cheated and bamboozled. But this fabrication of "Raffaelles," "Leonardos," "Luinis," and "Correggios" is not, and has not been, wholly the work of English speculators. The fraud has been practised, for the last forty years, by unscrupulous dealers in Paris, Milan, and elsewhere in Europe, who have realized large fortunes in that way. It is a capital investment, and the utmost caution will not be sufficient to insure the purchaser from becoming a victim, if he is simple enough to believe that he can get possession of a Raffaele, or a Leonardo, or a Luini, or a Correggio, by the outlay of a few hundred or even of a few thousand dollars. The works of all those great masters are known and recorded, catalogued, for the greater part, in print, and the possessors and their descendants have in most cases taken good and especial care that they should never be disposed of in any way likely to create doubt concerning their genuineness. The title of a true picture is always preserved; for the title is the only thing which really makes a precious work of art at any time a marketable commodity. Without its title, an original picture is at all times a subject of doubt to the inexperienced — aye, even to the most experienced in matters of art.

The first question a purchaser should ask of a party who offers him a Raffaele or a Correggio should be, "Have you a true title?" If no such thing can be produced, then beware! You see a fine picture. Why should it not be a fine one? There are many needy artists in England, France, Italy, and elsewhere, who are very excellent copyists. H. Fandin reduced the great Veronese's "Marriage in Cana" so that any expert would have accepted it as original. But you discover that the stretcher and the canvas are *old*. Of course

they *must* be. All the old canvases and stretchers are carefully laid aside for the manufacturers' use. The spurious "old masters" are signed fictitiously, and every kind of deception is practised.

Many tricks are resorted to by the agents of manufacturers of spurious works, and the most successful one is that of employing some respectable party, who is wholly unconscious of doing, or of aiding in the doing, a dishonorable act. A friend is cautioned about saying a word to *his* friends concerning it, and is requested

that the former friend knows nothing about the true value of a fine picture he is in possession of. *This* friend calls on *that*. Both are over-cunning, and neither of them contemplates a fraud. But the friend's friend thinks it fair sport if he can show how vastly superior he is in connoisseurship. Both parties are deceiving themselves; till at last the wily agent contrives to fix the treasure of art upon his victim, and to pocket a round thousand or so of dollars by way of profit. Such tricks are practised every day, everywhere, but above all in the United States, and deserve exposure.

Notwithstanding all that is said about "true titles" in this brief introductory sketch, original pictures by "old masters" of the highest repute have at times gone astray, and, their pedigrees being lost, the works when recovered have been criticised "ad nauseam" — accepted by some as veritable originals, repudiated by others, and at last have only been re-established as the productions of genius by appeals to the taste and judgment of the general public. It should always be borne in mind that the genuine character of a work of true art is not a *question* to be debated—it is a *fact* resting upon *evidence* broad and palpable; evidence primarily in the picture itself, and afterwards in the history of its existence.

MR. WHISTLER'S pamphlet, marching through its seventh edition, is very far from dead; it is still a living and acting menace to "Fors Clavigera." Its Swinburnisms and Carlylisms—even its slang—are forgiven in view of its basis of justice, and it is kept alive by the public too, a little in the light of the exercise of a punishment. In fact, the verdict against Ruskin was a success for the plaintiff from every point of view; he did not get damages, indeed, and he had to pay his costs; but he was willing to pay his costs for the privilege of making Mr. Ruskin, who was not willing, pay his. And he got a verdict technically in his favor,

which stamps the criticism—though by the British jurymen—as an outrage, and helps to define the limits of discussion allowable. As for Mr. Ruskin, two degradations proceed from the affair, and will long be



THE CAPTAIN OF CUIRASSIERS IN MEISSONIER'S "1807."
(SEE "PRIVATE ART GALLERIES," PAGE 29.)

to allow an old painting to be hung up in his room, just to keep it out of the sight of those troublesome fellows "the dealers," who want to get hold of a genuine "old master" for half its real value. Another friend is told

remembered. First, a critic of Ruskin's rank had to be supported by the evidence of an artist of Frith's rank; that is like bringing up a ball of grocer's twine to mend a harp. Second, the trial fixes in the memory what would else be forgotten, that the Oxford graduate condescended, it is feared, to ridicule a physical singularity—a discoloration of the hair—in calling Whistler a cock's-comb. To see a man of the character of Ruskin distinctly, though in a passion, leaving his rank as a gentleman, and bearing on physical peculiarities in a way which might be retaliated with the most withering effect, is a memorable spectacle, and his public will lay it up in their minds.

ART AND THE CLUBS.

THE art season which is just now at an end has embraced a series of agreeable and sometimes important events related to such of the New York clubs as maintain periodical exhibitions of art. The tendency of the day everywhere to recognize art as a prominent interest of society is evident, although the purpose of conserving the art element has been, perhaps, only in "The Century" absolutely put to the test. The necessary election of a presiding officer of that club made manifest the present drift of feeling toward art and a rigid adherence of the majority of members to the original basis of sentiment with which the society was founded. It happened on that occasion that a nearly invincible number of Centurions had determined on electing Mr. Gilbert M. Speir as president of the society. To the conservative members this gentleman was objectionable for the position, only on the ground of belonging to the legal profession, whereas art and literature are essentially the concern of The Century. And such an election they conceived would fail to be in harmony with the spirit of the constitution, setting forth that the society is to be composed of "authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts." Another candidate who, only by a few votes missed of carrying the day, was the Reverend Dr. Bellows. Finally religion fared no better than law, where both were necessarily "hors du combat" in an area belonging exclusively to the artist or the author. The election of Mr. Huntington was considered peculiarly fitting from his being one of the five surviving founders of the club, and perhaps the only one of this number very distinctly possessing the qualifications demanded for the office, if we except the venerable Mr. Durand.

In the management of its exhibition The Century is more exclusive than either of the other clubs, its pictures being contributed only by artists who are members—unless in case of members who are not artists loaning pictures from their own collections. The gallery affords room for about sixty pictures, but during the past year the monthly exhibitions have gained an additional feature by the arrangement of screens upstairs to provide space for water-colors, etchings and drawings, the screens being adjusted along the walls which have been devoted to the permanent collections of the society. The exhibitions, as is well known, are so far from being any public affair, that opportunities for pictures to find purchasers here are not very great. The gallery is open on Sunday and Monday, following the regular monthly reception of Saturday evening, those who are admitted being members, and other persons who either accompany them or have tickets bearing some member's signature. The purchases of The Century as a club have never been important, but a few additions of the past year are interesting. From Mr. Durand has been acquired a portrait of William Cullen Bryant, painted by that artist some thirty or forty years ago. Mr. Durand painted two portraits of Mr. Bryant at about the same time, and not greatly unlike each other. One was for the Bryant homestead at Roslyn, and the other was retained by the artist, until it passed into the possession of The Century Club, which previously had an engraving from the former portrait. The society has also very recently secured a photograph of Mr. Bryant, taken by Lawrence, and which is an early example of photography, having been exhibited at the Great Exhibition, London, in 1851. This picture, which was obtained through the hands of Mr. McEntee, is a souvenir which cannot but be greatly prized.

The Century, notwithstanding its wealth, expends in purchases and in disbursements for art generally a less sum than does the Union League. The latter makes an annual appropriation of \$2500 for art expenses, exclusive of purchases. For the year ending with Decem-

ber last the bill for collecting and hanging pictures and printing cards of invitation to artists was \$1200. In securing pictures for the monthly exhibitions a democratic method is followed which gives opportunity for the great number of artists to contribute. The space provides only for the hanging of sixty or seventy pictures. Each month, therefore, the names of artists who have recently exhibited are left out of the list of invitations, so that in the course of the year all reputable artists may be asked to contribute. Only in the May exhibition is exclusiveness the order. This is the exhibition of the Water Color Society in which none are represented who are not members of this society or else of the Union League Club. The great event of the year was the "Ladies' Exhibition" in January, at which the loan collection from the private galleries of citizens had an insurance value of \$130,000. It was then that the electric light was for the first time employed for lighting the pictures, and with a splendid effect. The foundation for a permanent collection of some consequence is being laid by this society, which frequently adds by purchase such pictures as Chase's "Ready for the Ride" and the large landscape by Hetzel.

During the season which has just closed there have been four art exhibitions at the Lotos Club, some of which have led to important sales. It is the aim of the art committee to secure works from the easels of local artists as far as possible, but foreign pictures are always welcome to the hospitable walls of The Lotos. The consequence of the recognition of the truth that art knows no country is that the club exhibitions have usually been very successful, both in point of interest and as to numbers. At the picture shows above-mentioned there were usually about seventy works exhibited at each. Of these, many were the productions of members of the club. The Lotos, as is well-known, permits the payment of an artist's entrance fee by the acceptance of a work from his own brush or chisel; by this arrangement the club has gradually come into the possession of a large and very valuable collection of original works of art, bearing the names of some of our best-known artists. Of a peculiar value, too, are the precious memorabilia gathered by the drift of circumstances—odd bits of sketches and chance contributions to the bric-a-brac of the club, which has been in existence long enough to be called an old club. During the season The Lotos' collection has been augmented by several desirable works, the contributions of newly-elected members, under the customary regulations.

The St. Nicholas, which is a new club grown from an old society, gave its first exhibition of art a year ago as a feature of the Whitsuntide festival, which this society celebrates after the German manner. Several exhibitions, similar in purpose to those of The Lotos, have been held during the year. The last to conclude the season was held on June 2d, to add attractiveness again to the celebration of Whitsuntide.

UNSALEABLE PICTURES.

WHAT makes one good picture salable and another good picture unsalable? There are simple rules about the preferences of the public, based upon widespread characteristics, which some person of the synthetic powers of Buckle might calculate, if he would; and then the artist might avoid certain easily-shunned snares which prevent his merits from bringing in the shekels he deserves. Why, for instance, did the best work ever painted by Magrath ("On the Old Sod," 380) hang fire at the late exhibition? Well, it seems that there is a certain handsomely-rounded portion of the human frame, called by the ancients the "callipyge," which must not be presented in the faces of the public. Magrath's pathetic exile is walking away from the spectator instead of coming towards him, and—"verbum sap." Again, a picture must not only not protrude the muscles between the spine and the calf, if it wishes to sell, but it must show the eyes open. "I would buy that Merle at once," said a collector, "only the eyelids are lowered, and I should never know what color the eyes were." There are two golden rules for the artist, which, if he will observe, will increase his sales—never show the back view of the hero, and never lower the eyes in a single-figure picture. Another indication is worth solid coin to a painter who paints to sell. An experienced artist who made street-views and groups said to an unsuccessful "rapin" of the same

"genre," "Why don't you put two or three dabs of red somewhere in front?" In the tyro's subsequent works the dabs of red duly appeared, and they sold. The additions appeased the natural desire of the public, based upon a deeply-planted need of the decorative. In fact, all of these whimsies, seemingly absurd, lie deep down in traits inherent in human character, and the artist had often better conduct his labors in sympathy with them than be too anxious to assert his independence.

COOPER INSTITUTE SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

THE usual annual series of exhibitions of the art classes of the Cooper Union, followed by a reception, the awarding of prizes, etc., took place during the three last days of May, and completed with the final event the twentieth year of the institution. The real usefulness of this excellent school comes to be more appreciated with each year of sending out scholars to engage in teaching or in art industry, and greater interest is thus felt to pertain to each successive exhibition.

In several departments the stimulus afforded by the prize system was easy to be traced, and in some instances so nearly equal in merit was the work of different pupils that the committees could not but have had a difficult problem in determining where to award a prize of \$20 or \$30 in gold, as the case might be. A number of the life-drawings would very highly commend students whose skill they exemplify for admission to the Academy classes, while equally creditable work was to be seen in drawing from the antique cast, in ornamental scroll drawing, and in other departments. Some of the original designs for stained glass, tessellated floors for vestibules, ceilings, tiles, wall-papers, etc., were conceived with intelligence; and in the women's department, in addition to some of the preceding classes of work, were very good designs for lace and for crewel embroidery; and a high grade had been attained in flower analysis. Quite a decided advance in technical quality was apparent in the China painting; for although not offering a large exhibition, this department bore evidence of the great improvement brought about by public interest in this branch of art during the year past, and with the services of such men as Mr. Vors and Mr. Louis C. Tiffany, contributed in the form of lectures to classes on China-painting and pottery, added to the regular instruction in the institution, and to that, moreover, which Mr. Bennett has afforded in receiving pupils from the School of Design for lessons with his classes of the Decorative Art Society. There has not been wanting any advantage in this study for those who have made such evident good use of their opportunities. But this year, as last, the most notable success appears to have been in those results which the institution does not profess to have eminently for its object. It happens that while a reasonable amount of proficiency is shown in designing for manufacture, the pupils most excel in the direction of high art. On the question whether such a circumstance may possibly be an index of a national tendency, it would, perhaps, be premature to have an opinion.

MR. R. E. MOORE has got together a very creditable collection of American pictures in his new gallery, many of which are new. There are 133 canvases in the catalogue, to which some additions have been made. "The Dress Parade," by J. G. Brown, representing a company of picturesque American street arabs playing soldier, is a good companion to "The Passing Show," which he has at the Salon in Paris this season. Mr. J. Lyman, Jr., exhibits a charming landscape, delightfully cool, with its dimpling rivulet and leafy shadows. Mr. Edward Moran sends his large picture of Normandy fisherwomen, "Toilers of the Shore," an admirable composition, full of life and action, and his "Sunset over New York Bay." "The Bath," by Thomas Moran, is a brilliant piece of coloring, representing a group of partially nude women in the cool retreat of a glen through which flows a most inviting pool of water. The figures are small enough to show to advantage the full range of the landscape.

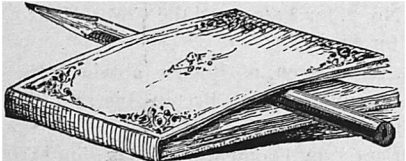
IN accordance with our promise in our first issue to vary the contents of the ART AMATEUR as much as possible, according to the requirements of the season, we introduce in the present number the department of "The Naturalist." Professor Holder, of the Museum of

Natural History, contributes the initial article on "Taxidermy," which is lucid and thoroughly practical; and Professor Day, who fills the chair of Natural Sciences at the New York Normal College, begins a series of delightful articles on collecting and preserving flowers, leaves, grasses, and ferns, with special suggestions in reference to the flora of each current month. While we shall pay particular attention during the summer to light art recreations, we think it best to take leave of the department of Music and such indoor occupations as fret-saw work and wood-carving until the fall of the year, when naturally they will be most appreciated.

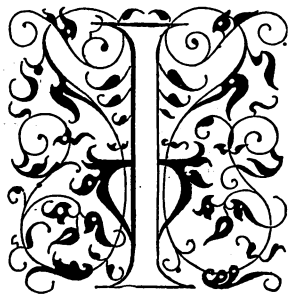
For the information of whom it may concern we would say that Charles A. Cole has no connection whatever with this publication.

Original designs for publication in THE ART AMATEUR are always welcome. We will pay for those accepted.

The Metropolitan Museum is to be congratulated on the acquisition by Mr. John Taylor Johnston, President of the Board of Trustees, of the valuable King collection of antique gems; for it is understood that he will hold it for six months at its disposition. The trustees must see that they do not let it slip through their fingers as they did the Tanagra figurines.



My Note Book.



It would be much to the advantage of the public if the trustees and managers of permanent and loan exhibitions would take upon themselves the duty of correcting the labels which the owners or donors of objects affix to them. The public, who should be

instructed, is often misled in the most singular manner. To mention a few cases in illustration of this, I recall two busts of Franklin exhibited years ago in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and both attributed to Houdon. The one nearest to the entrance was unquestionably by that excellent sculptor, and one of the best things he ever produced; but the other was so totally different in treatment that to attribute it to such an artist was almost an insult to his memory. In the same museum there is a bust of Hadrian, called an antique: it really belongs to the sixteenth century.

The catalogues of our loan exhibitions are as a rule badly done; they bristle for instance with such startling information as: "No. 1—a cup;" "No. 2—a saucer," and nothing more. These numbers, too, are frequently misplaced. In the first exhibition was a Griotte marble coupe with a setting in gilt bronze in the Louis XV. style, pompously labelled as "porphyry urn made out of a piece of the sarcophagus of Napoleon the First," and in another room some exquisite specimens of "Vernis-Martin" work were labelled Louis XIV. instead of Louis XV.

But after all, a mistake in date of a century or so is excusable compared with the fact that the public in general and even some members of the Metropolitan press were led to suppose that "Vernis Martin" was the name of an artist, and one of the latter went so far as to print it "V. Martin." Martin, who gave his name to the celebrated varnish he invented, was only a carriage varnisher, whose ambition was to imitate the lacquer of China and Japan. He succeeded in producing a transparent, colorless varnish, extremely hard, which when applied to paintings in water color or gouache on ivory made them permanent. His discovery was coincident with the prevailing fashion of using ivory for boxes, frames, fans, etc., a taste also induced by the admiration for Chinese work which the first Chinese embassy which came to Paris under Louis XV. had

made popular. To distinguish the pieces he himself had varnished from the enormous quantity of rubbish produced under his name, he would sign them "Vernis—par Martin," and thus add greatly to their value.

The Duke of Beaufort's arrival reminds me of a story I heard at the Savage Club two or three years ago, most beautifully illustrating the truth of the saying that "a Briton dearly loves a lord." His Grace is a patron of—or rather patronizes—the fine arts and the drama, and is president of "The Green-Room"—an actors' club where some one has said the members pray to his photograph regularly three times a day. The Duke is not gifted in conversation. In fact, to tell the truth, he is "as dumb as an oyster," and will sit at the club in gloomy silence for an hour at a time, sipping his toddy, while his satellites will gather about him and regard him with pleasurable awe. It was on such an occasion, says my informant, that Mr. Thorne, one of the managers of the London Vaudeville Theatre, who enjoys nothing so much as to be near His Grace, sat for one mortal hour in mute adoration. Not a word was said by any one in the room. All were overcome by the presence. At length the Duke rose, put on his hat, and went out, saying, "Good-night, gentlemen." Whereat the club rose in a body and said, "Good-night, your Grace." Then the club sat down and relapsed into silence, which was broken at last by Mr. Thorne, who with genuine enthusiasm exclaimed, "Say, isn't the Duke a jolly fellow!"

A young man went into the Astor Library the other day and most innocently asked the librarian whether he had "Boucicault's Decameron."

A Luini lately sold in this city, at some hundreds of dollars, to a well-known collector—a man of brains as well as money—was not a Luini at all. All the tradition, all the pedigree were of the same value as the picture. "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

"George Cruikshank," say The London World, "is one of the latest rages in America." There may be a few who pursue the furore, but the real connoisseur only buys George Cruikshank's works as a memento of a man of genius who was but a buffoon on the etching plate—terrible, impressive, hideous in the extreme, as occasion might require, but so full of whimsical exaggeration that he rarely got beyond caricature.

At the present time there is a curious controversy in regard to an antique tomb which belongs to the British Museum. It cost that establishment twenty thousand dollars to secure this superb relict of præarcadian art, and now it is said that the antiquity was made a few years ago by two brothers named Pinelli, one of whom has, in Paris, the reputation of not only mending, but matching parts of antiques when pieces are missing. A quarrel between the brothers about the division of the spoils led one of them to reveal the history of the tomb. The authorities of the British Museum of course deny the story; but it is to be hoped that the matter will be thoroughly investigated. In the meantime, let our American collectors take warning. If British Museum experts are thus fooled by Italian artisans, how much more readily will our own people be imposed upon, and bring back from the shores of the Mediterranean boxes of antique lamps, vases, and bronzes made the day before yesterday.

It is pleasant to notice the increase of window-gardening in New York. Nothing tends so much to relieve the impression of the dullness of a street as to come suddenly on a window bright with geraniums, heliotrope, and calceolarius. It is the fashion in some European cities for neighbors to club together to hire a gardener to look after their miniature gardens, or to pay a florist so much a week to keep their flower-pots and "jardinières" properly supplied, he changing the plants about once a month and replacing them by others in flower. The number of miniature gardens in New York has increased very much during the past few years. I remember when, not long ago, the beautiful parterres in front of Delmonico's old place in Fourteenth Street were almost the only thing of the kind in the city. Now, charming collections of tropical

plants and gay flower-beds are to be seen on Fifth Avenue at frequent intervals, all the way from the Brevoort House to Central Park. But these are confined almost exclusively to hotels and restaurants. Now, why should not something of the kind be attempted for the beautifying of private residences which have a few square yards of space in front of them. I commend the idea to the young ladies of these households, who may easily satisfy papa that this would be a splendid opportunity for them to cultivate the science of botany.

It is not generally known that the famous Hans Makart has a brother in this city who is an artist. At least he is rather a draughtsman than an artist. One of the most carefully finished pen-and-ink drawings I have ever seen was a minute representation of his brother's studio in Vienna.

That the Female Colossus of Liberty which is to dominate The Narrows halts in her march to New York for lack of funds to pay M. Bartholdi is not surprising. A lottery of French painters' and sculptors' works is now proposed to furnish the additional modest quota of two hundred thousand francs still needed for this female "fury with a torch in her hand." By the way, there is a statue by D'Amoret of "Columbus Discovering America," a dramatic story in plaster, of undeniably merit, whose admirers have been vainly endeavoring to locate it in Central Park.

Much of the beautiful Japanese bronze metal work derived the color and exact fusion of its alloy, like the discovery of Charles Lamb's "Roast Pig," in China, from an accident. The "green copper" (sei-do) is composed of copper and lead, or copper, lead and tin, and is declared to have been first produced by a large conflagration which took place in China during the earlier part of the fifteenth century.

Mayor Cooper, it seems, has selected a working architect, Thomas McAvoy, to fill the place in the Department of Buildings just vacated by Superintendent Dudley. It is as strange as gratifying to read that the incomer is not known to have been identified with any political party.

At every important book-sale there is a buyer who represents the Astor Library and other public libraries. If some rare book of worth be in the catalogue, this agent knows just how much he can offer for it, and he generally gets it. Why should not the managers of the Metropolitan Museum of Art have such a buyer to attend important bric-a-brac sales? Instances have come to my knowledge recently of purchases, by private individuals for trifling sums, which should certainly have been snapped up by the museum.

It is said that the taste for dancing, once so strong among the French, is dying out. The laying down of carpets and the passion for collecting bric-a-brac in bourgeois drawing-rooms render improvised hops impossible.

Some of our contemporaries are quite witty at the expense of Mr. Whistler, whose bankruptcy is announced. One suggests "an arrangement with his creditors in black and white" would be a good subject for his next picture; and another thinks that "a harmony in gold and silver" would not be amiss. There is a story at the back of Mr. Whistler's troubles which, if known to these wits, would I think make them feel more kindly toward him. It would not be proper to enter here into the family scandal upon which this story hangs; but I may say that Mr. Whistler's share in it has been that of a much-injured man, who has borne his wrongs with a noble patience rather than, by avenging them, compromise the name of an innocent person. His manly conduct has availed him naught, however, with his unrelenting enemy (a relative by marriage), who himself has been shielded by it. Mr. Whistler has been pursued professionally in the cruellest manner by this unscrupulous person, through whose influence it mainly was that Whistler was first excluded from the Burlington Gallery, and finally became the object of Mr. Ruskin's vituperation.

MONTEZUMA.